BOOKS OF THE WEEK SEEN IN REVIEW AND COMMENT

CRITICAL REVIEWS OF THE SEASON'S LATEST BOOKS

Mr London Tells a Triangular Story Set in Ca ifornia —Mr. Morris Exposes the American Girl.

New Novels by Cameron Mackenzie, Rider Haggard, George Barr McCutcheon, and Other Writers.

Many Collections of Short Stories Set in Many Localities—Thomas Burke's Good Piece of Work.

Cultivated California.

It is a day dream of what might be done in certain lines with unbounded wealth and extraordinary ability that Jack London describes in *The Little Lady of the Big House* (Macmillans). His hero, the heir to many millions, discovers at an early age his own remarkable powers and the value of efficiency methods. He prefers bohemian forms of education, runs away from home at 13, tramps around the country for years, then returns in order to take a college course, after which he has more years of wandering of the kind favored by admirers of Stevenson, in the course of which he marries. We are led to surmise that the adventures of the young pair in the South Seas and the dangerous parts of the earth are fully up to the literary standard. This training makes the man somehow an efficiency expert of almost superhuman mechanical accuracy, whose agricultural enterprises, conducted on the lavish California scale, are described enthusiastically and minutely. He and his wife are devotedly attached to each other, yet live their own lives in separate wings of a spacious mansion and generally only meet in the evenings.

The intellectual side is far from being neglected. The hero keeps a private band of philosophers, and his house seems to be used as a sort of hotel by a multitude of people, including musicians, artists, writers and professional and business men. They discuss the most recent aspects of the arts. They are interested in the most modern cultured dialect, so that many brilliant conversations need annotations. In manners and ethical standards, too, they are admirably free from conventional trammels. With so much to occupy the mind it seems like an imposition on the reader to ask him also to study the psychology of a woman who loves two men at once.

There is a strange lack of human feeling in all the parties concerned, which may be intentional. The wife is a poetical, spritelike creature, a sort of Undine; a community of tastes and some timely sympathy draws her to her husband's best friend, and her husband no doubt neglects her because he is engrossed in his business. But there seems to be little reason for her loving the new man, especially as she is always conscious that she loves her husband. The affair leaves the impression that the author is turning the situation into an abstract psychological problem which he does not venture to solve. The husband's behavior, admirable and inteligent as it is, seems cold blooded even in an efficiency machine, and the unlucky lover cannot be defended. The refinements of passionless intellectual infidelity do not harmonize with the vivid realism of the setting and the poetical pictures of outdoor California.

A Wife's Caprices.

It is painful to see a young author turn against the idols he has worshipped as Gouverneur Morris does in *We Three* (Appletons). To be sure, neither he nor the amiable narrator and victim of the story has a word to say against the modern American girl. Yet both expose her utter selfishness and frivolity. The narrator is a very likable youth with no pretension to brains, but a gentleman throughout. His story of his early years and of his admiration for his friend's wife is delightful and delicate comedy. She is a charming creature who has married for love and is very happy with her husband and her two children. She has always had her own way, and has enjoyed the present moment and flirted with any man who is at hand. Her husband is called away on business for a few days, during which she entertains herself with his friend; when he returns she informs him that she no longer loves him and asks him to divorce her. The friend has lost his head, too, and drastic measures are used by his family and by her husband to prevent the two from making fools of themselves. As the wife's disregard for everything but herself and her wishes is demonstrated the story turns rather to tragedy; the girl comes out of it all right, but the consolation devised for the narrator is hardly satisfactory even with the hint of disaster at the end. It is beautifully executed work; the girl is very lifelike and the lover and his parents are delightful.

One Modern Wife.

The trouble that can be made by a well intentioned but hysterically impulsive young woman bound to have her own way is described by Cameron Mackenzie in *Mr. and Mrs. Pierce* (Dodd, Mead and Company). After surviving several infatuations for careers about which she knows nothing she has married an estimable and patient young man and is happy with him and her baby. She seizes on a chance remark of a friend of her husband's, who is not overscrupulous in business nor in other matters, is dazzled with his possessing a new automobile and decides that her husband shall become a financial power. She knows and cares nothing about business, yet forces him to engage unwillingly in a commercial undertaking for which he knows he is not fitted. She blames him for his lack of success, repeatedly interferes in a maddening way and upsets his calculations; she resents the remonstrances and the refusals to abet her of her family and friends. She believes her husband is faithless to her, comes near losing her baby and finds out that her automobile friend wishes to make love to her. Then she fortunately discovers that she has been making a fool of herself, and with the assistance of her long suffering husband starts afresh. The author's dissection of this type of modern girl, ambitious, ignorant and deaf to advice, is pitiless; he ascribes her faults to youth and evidently admires her, but the reader, while he may be sorry for her, will hardly share his admiration. He will sympathize with the husband and will like several elderly lookers-on who are powerless to help. The picture here drawn can be recognized in every community.

Allan Quartermain Revived.

With great geniality Sir H. Rider Haggard in *The Ivory Child* (Longmans, Green and Company) allows his African hero to relate an episode in his career that he had passed over. He knows that he is no stranger to the reader and so does not hesitate to refer him to his earlier yarns and to bring in again former companions. He begins humorously with some rather funny experiences in an English country house, but before long we are again in South Africa and are hunting with grim determination for a strange white race in the heart of the continent. They have spirited away to guard a sacred image an English woman who must be rescued; they are opposed by an inferior race whose talisman is a demon elephant, which must be destroyed. There is much exciting work to be done which Allan Quartermain and his friends are as competent as ever to handle. When he closes the book the reader will rejoice that after all these years the Haggards still ride as they did before.

On the Maine Coast.

An imperious, self-sufficient Chicago young woman who wilfully misjudges a man is brought to her senses very pleasantly in Clara Louise Burnham's *Instead of the Thorn* (Houghton Mifflin Company). The schoolmaster tone he assumes toward her is some excuse for her resentment. When a great sorrow comes upon her she is taken to the Maine seashore, somewhere near Portland, and meets several delightful local characters. Her own aunt is one; the small girl who is her help is another. The acquaintance with the latter the reader will probably treasure up; he will admire her resourcefulness in speeding laggard lovers. The heroine naturally has a delightful vacation, which she allows the reader to share; all troubles are smoothed away with less assistance from her religious friend than is anticipated at first, and when the young man is permitted to come East also the proper termination is assured. It is a pleasing story in itself. We should have regretted missing Blanche Aurora's performances.

A Michigan Despot.

Though it takes time to rouse there is fine progressive zeal in the young lawyer who is the hero of Clarence B. Kelland's *The Hidden Spring* (Harpers). His amiable indolence and readiness to make friends is so attractive that we rather regret his being stirred to action, the more so as the villain, when he first meets him, is picturesque and original and full of artistic possibilities. He is an arbitrary boss, however, who in his impatience soon becomes coarsely brutal and must be met with brute force. The revelations of the possible abuses of one man power in a small community are interesting; the hero tackles them with a technical ability which is surprising in a newly fledged lawyer. Reform also upsets the machine with gratifying speed. The young woman who aids his dog in prodding the hero into action is attractive and the hindrances in the way to their coming together enliven the recital of reform agitations. The story is told with humor and vigor. We regret that the author did not make more of his capable old bully and his talent for cooking before brutalizing him and handing him over to the hero for punishment.

Back to the Land.

A middle aged pair of cliff dwellers, the husband a writer, the wife an artist, decide to go into the country to live in Harriet Brunkhurst's *The Window in the Feace* (George H. Doran Company). They find a house that suits them and very kind neighbors. The alterations they make are described in great detail and also their plans for cultivating their land. A friend persuades them before they move to adopt three orphan boys; they agree and find more occupation in watching the boys. They live more happily than in the city, discuss many things with their friends, foster a pretty love affair and learn to love the boys. One boy is made to die rather cruelly in order to carry out a queer reincarnation fancy, for the wife finally has a baby which she is sure is the spirit of the dead boy returned to the flesh. It is a rather desultory and rambling tale, for the author seems to have made room in it to express her ideas on a great variety of subjects, but there are many extremely pleasant passages and episodes in it.

The Golden Women of Borneo.

A first rate tale of adventure is told admirably by Patrick and Terence Casey in *The Strange Story of William Hyde* (Hearst's International Library Company, New York). The narrator runs across an eccentric beach comber in the Hawaiian islands and gets him to tell his story. He is a red haired, blue eyed Irishman, who once was a hunter for rare orchids in Borneo. He hears of a strange race living in an inaccessible part of the island whom all others shun and who possess some strange god that cannot be named. He makes his way into the place, finds a yellow people with beautiful women who are the descendants of Genghis Khan's Tatars. On account of his hair and eyes they take him for a descendant of Genghis, he is loved by one woman and hated by another, tries to carry off their treasure, fights a gorilla and is cast out of the land. After he has told his tale he sets out for Borneo once more in the hope of trying the adventure again. The authors are lavish with their native words, but they have spun a yarn that will carry the reader along to the very end.

A Juryman's Experience.

The right sort of realism is used by George Barr McCutcheon in telling a capital short story, *The Light That Lies* (Dodd, Mead and Company). The account of the court proceedings and of the trial might almost be a newspaper report and the doings in the jury room can be verified in other men's experiences. A mysterious young woman who never speaks plays havoc with all in the court room. The reader will suspect the influence that acts on the hero and his fellow jurors; he will share in their mystification and he will be as much staggered as the hero is at the outcome. Original plots are not common nowadays, but the author has one here.

Paul Helleu's dry-point portrait of Whistler.

"Notes on Some Rare Portraits of Whistler" make up a beautiful little book published by A. E. Gallatin through John Lane Company. There are reproduced six interesting examples hitherto unpublished, including work by Seymour Haden, "Max," Giovanni Boldini, Thomas R. Way, Paul Helleu and "E. T. R." The Helleu dry point here reproduced measures 6 by 4 inches, of which only twelve impressions were printed.

SHORT STORIES.

Southern Waters and Alaska.

A rich young man bored with the routine of life steps into a New Orleans carnival crowd in the title story of Rex Beach's *The Crimson Gardenia and Other Stories* (Harpers) and for an hour or more is jolted through adventure enough to last him a life time. It is a good story that could stand some amplification. The next two are graphic, artistic sketches of Haytian savagery; nearly all the others are vigorous tales of lawless doings in Alaska, which is now the last shelter for the Bret Harte breed of outcast adventure. All the stories are entertaining and readable.

C. Quarles Again.

Another set of ingenious criminal puzzles evolved by the scientific mind of Christopher Quarles will be found in Percy James Brebner's *The Master Detective* (E. P. Dutton and Company). There are fifteen of them, all dealt with in the same intuitive fashion, crimes and circumstances described briefly, with few indications on which the reader can work till Quarles comes in with his private information and intuition and sets everything straight. He, his amiable daughter and his detective chronicler remain unchanged, as do the methods. The stories are all interesting and Mr. Brebner writes good English.

Welsh Peasants.

The artistic quality of the sketches which Caradoc Evans calls *My People* (Andrew Melrose, London) is beyond cavil. It is as clear cut work and truer to nature than Maupassant's portraits of French peasants. He depicts a small community of bigoted Welsh country people and finds no goodness in any of them. The preacher, the elders, tradesmen, farm people, men and women alike, are hard, covetous, hypocritical, miserly and untruthful. The women have no virtue, nor have the men. There is no hint of decent feeling in any person that figures in any of the stories; it is a relief to find one creature energetic enough to kill the girl he wants and the man she has taken up with. The author's people, as he chooses to see them, are lower than beasts.

A Woman Detective.

The heroine of Arthur L. Reeve's *Constance Dunlap* (Hearst's International Library Company) begins by committing a crime for purely selfish motives. After that she employs her ingenuity in getting others out of scrapes, and every time gets the better of a male detective, who opposes her. She is embarrassed by her extreme attractiveness to the men she has to deal with. The twelve stories are not so much accounts of detective methods as descriptions of the manner in which crimes may be committed.

CONCERNING WAR.

Escaped Prisoners.

The personal experiences of a London war correspondent who ventured into Germany to observe what was going on are related by Geoffrey Pyke in *To Ruheleben and Back* (Houghton Mifflin Company). He writes with a notable absence of ill feeling toward the Germans and is fair in his account of conditions at the beginning of the war. He was soon captured and, luckily for him, instead of being shot as a spy was imprisoned in various camps and finally in that for civilians near Berlin. From that he escaped with a companion and they made their way by a roundabout route to the Dutch frontier. The main portion of the story deals with their experiences after they got away and is naturally interesting as a tale of adventure.

On the Russian Side.

It is not so much an account of the German advance into Russia in the first year of the war that Stanley Washburn has written in *Victory in Defeat* (Doubleday, Page and Company) as a criticism of the campaign from the military side and an explanation of the moral gain to Russia from her defeats. He believes that the result has been to unify Russian sentiment and to make the nationalities in the territory overrun, the Poles, Lithuanians and the rest, turn their sympathy and hopes to Russia rather than to Germany. He eulogizes various prominent Russians with whom he came in contact.

Two Pacifists.

In *Above the Battle* (The Open Court Publishing Company, Chicago) Romain Rolland, writing from Switzerland, has collected the various articles in which he expresses his abhorrence of war, and appeals, individually and collectively, to German intellectual leaders to employ their reason and higher ideals in place of the objurgation of which they have been guilty.

An Englishman, A. A. Warden, who has striven, also from Switzerland, to stem the flood of war with his personal appeals for peace, prints in *Common-sense Patriotism* (G. W. Dillingham Company) his articles and the open letters he has written to various prominent men. He is backed by a long "foreword" by Norman Angell approving of his efforts and expressing a like detestation of war in any form.

Iniquity of Surplus Wealth.

Having delved below the surface and discovered the factors that are really responsible for the present war, Dr. Frederic C. Howe in *Why War* (Charles Scribner's Sons) relieves himself of his views regarding the war in general, its origins and the means to be used in putting an end permanently to it. The war has been caused by what he calls the financial class, particularly that holding the offensive corporate form, which now has feudal power over the world, the most pernicious members of which are now the munition makers. The power of this class in many directions that are indicated should be removed, and also its ability to acquire more money than it should have. In spite of the dogmatic tone the exposition of Dr. Howe's revolutionary Utopia is interesting.

Pleas in Fiction Form.

The supposititious invasion of a country by the enemy has been employed for many years to popularize theories about the conduct of war and other public affairs, and has already been utilized several times within a year by advocates of preparedness. Cleveland Moffett now tries his hand at it in *The Conquest of America* (George H. Doran Company), making, with questionable taste, the Germans the invaders of the United States and many well known men the actors. He demonstrates to his own satisfaction the accuracy of all alarmist forebodings and the need for all the measures the extreme advocates of preparedness demand.

The pacifists provoke Porter Emerson Browne to a lively satirical outburst in *Peace—At Any Price* (Appletons), in which a peace meeting in Carnegie Hall is broken up by a glorious fight, the greatest of pacifists is severely mauled and some vigorous talk is indulged in.

Divine assistance is called in to defeat the Germans by Frederic Arnold Kummer and Henry P. Jones in *The Second Coming* (Dodd, Mead and Company). The Kaiser remains obdurate after the personal appeals made to him in visions, and his army is done away with through the agency of a heavy snowstorm on Christmas Day.

War Caricatures.

The peculiarity of the comic pictures by W. Heath Robinson, *Some Frightful War Pictures* (Duckworth and Company; John Lane Company), is that they jest at war without any ill feeling. They indicate that some people in England, at any rate, are lighter hearted than we supposed. The pictures are funny and very well drawn.

The Yellow Peril.

A Japanese remonstrance against misrepresentation, which takes the form of replies to a book by G. B. Rea, is issued by Dr. Toyokichi Iyenaga in *Japan's Real Attitude Toward America* (G. P. Putnam's Sons). This contains Count Okuma's declaration printed in THE SUN, articles by Dr. Iyenaga and other Japanese writers and letters from Americans conversant with Japan.

LONDON BY NIGHT.

It is a real book that Thomas Burke has written in *Nights in London* (Henry Holt and Company), descriptions of wanderings about the great city by one who is part of it and who feels the poetry of the night. There is no system in his rambles; he is not acting as a guide for strangers who want to see the sights, but tells what he sees on his newspaper errands or when he is out of work or when he deliberately starts after adventure. He visits the theatres and the music halls, to be sure, but more frequently explores the slums and dangerous places or the residential districts of middle class respectability. Everywhere he finds something picturesque or striking, if not in the places then in the people he runs across. He has a weakness for the women he meets with and has some pitiable tales to tell; he manages to convey the impression of abject misery which seems to be deeper in London than anywhere else. He never shirks telling of an ugly sight or fact, but he does not go out of his way to seek either and tells it frankly and directly without trying for literary effect or harping on it. It is remarkably good work, full of life and showing a side of London of which most visitors can catch only an occasional glimpse.

BOYS' BOOKS.

A trapper and three small boys in Charles Clark Munn's *Camp Castaway* are carried off into the Canadian wilderness when the captive balloon in which they are riding breaks loose. They have only their knives and a few matches with which to start on their Robinson Crusoe career, but with the trapper's science they manage to pass the winter comfortably and profitably and return to civilization with a lot of entertaining and exciting experience (Appletons).

The jaunty and amusing hero of two earlier books by J. Raymond Elderdice affords more fun in *T. Haviland Hicks, Junior* (Appletons). Through all his nonsense he retains his shrewdness and kindliness. In this stage of his college career he settles a disputed point in football with great ingenuity and conducts successfully a ludicrous campaign for the control of the college paper.

Using his privilege of calling his heroes to life again Joseph A. Altsheler in *The Keepers of the Trail* (Appletons) engages his "Young Trailers" in further thrilling adventures in the forests of the middle West against Indians and their British allies. That was the home of all Indian tales in the days when they meant something to boys. Mr. Altsheler has preserved all the right traditions in this series of stories and they are as exciting to read now as the forbidden ones that our boys' grandfathers delighted in.

A young fellow who has kept his eyes open and has attended to business in a city hardware store takes hold of a rundown concern in a country village in William O. Stoddard Jr.'s *Making Good in the Village* (Appletons) and makes it successful by the application of efficient methods. He has to deal with the element of human nature as well, which improves his theories and likewise gives liveliness to the story.

In *The Farm That Jack Built* (Appletons) it is improved methods in agriculture, following the Government reports, and efficient distribution, that William O. Stoddard, Jr., brings to the attention of youth. He puts life into his people, which makes the story interesting.

Finally in *The Purple Pennant* (Appletons), third of a high school series, Ralph Henry Barbour with his trained skill again interests youth in the development of track athletics. He has the knack of making his stories pleasant reading, whether school or college doings or the wooing of the summer girl be the subject he chooses.

MEREDITH NICHOLSON ON THE WRITING HOOSIER.

Meredith Nicholson was the chief speaker at the laying of the cornerstone of the new Indianapolis public library. Mr. Nicholson is as entertaining when he speaks as when he writes. He thus accounts for the story telling proclivities of the Hoosier:

"We have been subjected to a good deal of jesting about Indiana's literary industry, but this is not a new thing in Indiana. Even in pioneer times there were poets—numbers of them piping their lays, and the earliest settlers were the best of story tellers. We are all to us asked how we account for the fact that so many novels come out of Indiana, and I shall offer on this occasion what I believe to be the true explanation of this.

"In the old pioneer times opportunities for social intercourse were few. The pioneer was a lonely man, often separated by miles of woodland and his from his neighbors, and when the settlers met at long intervals every man woman and child had a story to tell. might be of the hunt, it might be of an Indian raid, it might be of a freshet that washed out his corn, but they all had their stories and when they came together they seized the opportunity to tell them, and we may well believe that they told them effectively and with a fine sense of their dramatic value. That is why we people of these middle States have always been story tellers and why we produced one of the greatest of raconteurs in Abraham Lincoln. The civil war again stimulated the story telling impulse. Soldiers coming home had stories to tell, and having learned the art from their pioneer fathers they told them well, and from telling it came to writing one is, I suggest, an easy and natural transition."

THE YEARS REVOLVE, AND HATRED GROWS TO LOVE

In Pearl Doles Bell's story of "His Harvest" (John Lane Company) we find Jean Delaine, very young, newly an orphan, communing with her dog Tige. It is plain that she has a strong will and that she hates Jim Atherton, who has a mortgage on the pleasant house that has always sheltered her, situated somewhere up the Hudson. Nothing seems more improbable than that Jean will ever refrain from hating Jim.

Jim's appearance was not at all calculated to inspire hatred. "Jim Atherton, tall and straight as a Greek god, his handsome face tanned to a healthy bronze, locked arms with Brice Mathews and the two of them strolled away toward the far end of the room." We find Hazel Willis repelling gently the proffered affection of Brice Mathews. Who was Hazel Willis? Is it possible that she and Jean Delaine were one and the same? For the answer to this richly suggestive question we refer the reader to the tale.

What morality and what veracity were lodged in the handsome person of Winifred Blake? When Winifred appeared to have the wish to drown herself, and when Hazel Willis dragged her from the river, what was the truth regarding the charges made by Winifred against Jim? Hazel appeared to have trustworthy powers of divination. Her cold scorn of Winifred will impress the reader.

There is a line at page 63 that casts illumination upon the doings of Jean. A cable despatch from her, sent from Paris and addressed to Allen Hamilton, New York impresario, reads: "Need $4,000. Can't explain. Mortgage voice." Did Jean love this admirable impresario, to whom she was vastly indebted? We feel ourselves at liberty to say that if she had loved him it would have been no more than was his due. But there was Jim, whom in her childish years she had hated; Jim, who looked like a Greek god, and whose character was as admirable as his appearance. We find Jim writing to Jean: "I am off to Africa. The solitude of the wide spaces of sand, the profound insinuating silence, the desert with the sky like an inverted saucer meeting it at the rim, the illimitable distances, a low sun bleached tent and a camel—all these things are calling me. They offer me balm. Away off there, when my man and I are the only living things which—so we are told—are fashioned after the image of God, I will learn to think of you without pain." Jim had a good knack of writing. The reader may believe that Jim's case was hopeless, if the reader wishes.

What is this? "'Jean, Jean; you must never leave me again! You must——' The primitive instincts of a cave man who loves had sprung into life, but the girl's startled eyes brought civilization back to its own. Allen Hamilton's flesh went cold. Instantly he recovered his self-control. He had frightened her! Boor!" There is a line later. "'Jean!' She was in his arms again and all the world was forgotten." It was Jim back from Africa. A sprightly and engaging story.